

Foreign Language and International Studies: Federal Aid Under Title VI of the Higher Education Act

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Summary

Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA)—International Education Programs—authorizes a variety of grants to institutions of higher education (IHEs) and related entities to enhance instruction in foreign language and area studies (FLAS). This is one of the oldest U.S. Department of Education (ED) programs of support to higher education, having been initiated as Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958. This program reflects the special priority placed by the federal government on FLAS, especially with respect to diplomacy, national security, and trade competitiveness. Interest in HEA Title VI and other federal programs supporting FLAS has increased recently due to concerns regarding terrorism arising from foreign regions which are infrequently included in American postsecondary curricula.

Although HEA Title VI authorizes several distinct activities, approximately three-fifths of the funds are used for two of these—National Language and Area Centers (NLACs) and FLAS Fellowships. This pair of programs has long been the core activity supported under Title VI, while the others are smaller-scale supplementary activities intended to serve more specific goals (e.g., the Business and International Educational Education Program) or to support the two primary programs (e.g., the Language Resource Center program).

There appears to be broad agreement that interaction between American society and people and cultures from throughout the world is increasing steadily, generating national security concerns involving nations large and small. International education advocates argue that since it may be impossible to predict which nations will generate such concern in the future, and substantial time is required to develop the necessary human capital, it is important that ongoing support be provided from some source for instruction in all of the world's significant languages and cultures. However, it may be questioned whether this support should be provided by the federal government, and whether it should be focused on the nation's colleges and universities, on federally operated language schools, or both.

It is likely that the 110th Congress will consider reauthorizing the HEA. Major reauthorization issues regarding HEA Title VI include the following: Should the federal government continue to support foreign language and areas studies in American institutions of higher education through HEA Title VI? Are HEA Title VI programs appropriately coordinated with other federal efforts to support advanced foreign language and area studies? And, should there be increased targeting of Title VI grants on foreign languages and world regions of “critical” interest to the federal government?

This report will be updated periodically, in response to relevant legislative or budgetary actions.

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Introduction

Title VI of the Higher Education Act (HEA, P.L. 89-329, as amended)—International Education Programs—authorizes a variety of grants to institutions of higher education (IHEs) and related institutions for the purpose of enhancing instruction in foreign language and area studies (FLAS). This is one of the oldest, continuous programs of federal support to higher education, having been initiated as Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA, P.L. 85-864). It played a historical role of helping to establish, along with non-governmental support from certain foundations, multi-disciplinary “area studies” departments in many colleges and universities, especially during the late 1950s and 1960s. Throughout its life, the program has also supported courses and programs in less commonly taught languages or world regions.

The long history of this program reflects the special priority placed by the federal government on FLAS, especially with respect to diplomacy, national security, and trade competitiveness. Interest in HEA Title VI and other federal programs supporting FLAS has increased recently as a result of concerns regarding terrorism arising from foreign regions which are infrequently included in American postsecondary curricula, and a related interest in greater expertise in those areas.

As with the rest of the HEA, Title VI may be considered for reauthorization by the 110th Congress. This report is intended to provide an overview of Title VI programs, and an analysis of reauthorization issues.

Authorized Activities and Their Funding

The appropriation Title VI remained at \$93.1 million in FY2007 and \$95.6 million in FY2008.

Table 1 lists each of the specific activities currently supported under Title VI, along with the average size of individual grants (in FY2007), the FY2007 appropriation, and the FY2008 Administration budget request.¹

The authorization and appropriations statutes for HEA Title VI provide discretion to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in allocating funds among these specific activities. The main constraints on this discretion include the provision of separate authorization levels for the Parts (A, B, and C) under which the Title VI activities are organized; most grants are made under each activity on a multi-year basis, with implicit obligations for future years.

The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (P.L. 105-244) authorized Title VI at “such sums as necessary” through December 31, 2005. The statutory authorities in the HEA expired at the end of FY2004; however, they have been recently extended and currently remain effective.² The last specific authorization was for FY1999, at \$80 million for Part A, \$18 million for Part B, and \$10 million for Part C. The HEA also provides that no more than 10% of Part A funds may be used for Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Programs.

As can be seen in **Table 1**, while HEA Title VI authorizes a relatively large number of distinct activities, approximately three-fifths of the funds are used for two of these programs: National Language and Area Centers (NLACs) and FLAS Fellowships. These programs are closely related, in that almost all NLAC grant recipients also receive grants to offer FLAS Fellowships to at least some of their graduate students (a small number of IHEs which do not receive NLAC grants also

¹ This information will be replaced by the FY2008 appropriation and FY2009 request for each activity upon release of the Administration’s budget request for FY2009.

² The most recent extension of these authorities goes through July 31, 2007, under the First Higher Education Extension Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-44).

receive FLAS Fellowship grants). This pair of programs has long been the core activity supported under Title VI, while the others are smaller-scale supplementary activities intended to serve more specific goals (e.g., the Business and International Educational Education or Institute for International Public Policy Programs) and/or to support the two primary programs (e.g., the Language Resource Center or International Research and Studies programs).

Under each of the HEA Title VI programs, funds are allocated on a competitive/discretionary basis, with a statutory emphasis on “excellence” in the selection of National Language and Area Centers, FLAS Fellowship recipients, and Language Resource Centers, and on “equitable distribution” of grants, “to the extent practicable and consistent with the criterion of excellence,” under other Part A programs (see Sections 607 and 608).

Table 1. Title VI, Higher Education Act: Programs to Support Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS)

Program	Major Activities	Average Award (FY2007)	FY2007 Appropriation	FY2008 Administration Budget Request
Part A—International and Foreign Language Studies				
National language and area centers	Support for institutional programs of advanced instruction in FLAS at IHEs (or consortia), including research, development, summer programs, and outreach/consultative services to other IHEs, governments, businesses, and professional or trade associations. Centers are to maintain linkages with overseas IHEs and other organizations, as well as specialized library collections. Funds may be used for faculty/staff travel costs.	\$231,000	\$28,850,000	\$28,850,000
Language resource centers	Aid to a limited number of national centers to establish and operate programs of instruction in less commonly taught languages, research on foreign language instruction and performance assessment methods, operation of intensive summer language institutes, preparation of instructional materials, and assessment of the nation's strategic needs in this area.	\$320,000	\$4,800,000	\$4,800,000
Foreign language and area studies fellowships	Fellowships for graduate students of high academic potential in FLAS programs (either full year or summer). Grants are made by ED to participating IHEs (including most recipients of National Language and Area Center grants), which then select fellowship recipients. The use of stipends may include foreign travel (for students and dependents).	\$27,000 (average fellowship)	\$29,130,000	\$29,130,000
Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Programs	Development and/or operation of expanded and/or innovative FLAS programs at the undergraduate level, including use of new technologies to increase access to such instruction, establishment of internships, development of study abroad programs, or partnerships with K-12 schools. Priority is given to IHEs which require all entering students to complete at least two years of foreign language courses and/or require students to take 2 or more years of such courses in order to graduate from the IHE. Required non-federal match of 33.3% (if provided in cash by private sector corporations or foundations) or 50% (if provided in cash from institutional funds or in kind from any source).	\$75,000	\$4,320,000	\$3,975,000
International Research and Studies Projects	Support for research and studies of the need for foreign language instruction and for FLAS specialists, publication of specialized instructional materials, assessment of the effects of HEA Title VI programs (including the utilization of program graduates), research and development on improved methods of FLAS instruction, and evaluation of methods to test language competency. Major recent efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of HEA Title VI programs (described below) have been funded under this provision.	\$133,000	\$5,822,000	\$5,552,000
Technological Innovation and Cooperation for	Support for IHEs and/or libraries (or consortia) to develop innovative technologies to organize, preserve, and disseminate information in foreign languages or on foreign regions. Required non-federal match of 33.3%.	\$170,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000

Program	Major Activities	Average Award (FY2007)	FY2007 Appropriation	FY2008 Administration Budget Request
Foreign Information Access				
American Overseas Research Centers	Grants to consortia of American IHEs to establish and/or operate overseas research centers. Eligible centers must receive at least 50% of their financial support from U.S. sources and have a "permanent presence" in a foreign country.	\$83,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Part B—Business and International Education Programs				
International Business Education Centers	Support for IHEs or consortia to establish or operate comprehensive national centers that provide interdisciplinary instruction and technical assistance combining business and international studies; conduct research on ways to strengthen international aspects of business and professional curricula and to promote the international competitiveness of U.S. businesses; increase understanding of the culture of U.S. trading partners; and serve as resources to meet the international educational needs of businesses and other IHEs located in their region. Funded centers must establish a broadly representative advisory council. Required non-federal match of 10% (first year), 30% (second year), or 50% (third and succeeding years).	\$344,000	\$10,650,000	\$10,650,000
Business and International Education Projects	Assistance to IHEs for educational programs that combine business and international studies, and promote linkages between IHEs and business firms. Required non-federal match of 50%.	\$83,000	\$4,320,000	\$3,935,000
Part C—Institute for International Public Policy				
Institute for International Public Policy	A grant to a consortium of an IHE serving substantial numbers of African American or other underrepresented minority students, a Historically Black College or University, and/or an IHE with programs for training foreign service professionals, to prepare African American and other underrepresented minority students for international and foreign service careers with the federal government or private international organizations. Students apply as sophomores to participate in a five-year sequence of sophomore and junior summer policy institutes, junior year study abroad, intensive language training, internships, and graduate study. Required non-federal match of 50%. An Interagency Committee on Minority Careers in International Affairs is also established under this Part.	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
General Provisions				
Evaluation and Dissemination	Evaluation, outreach, and information dissemination for all HEA Title VI programs	na	\$800,000	\$800,000
Peer Review	Peer review of all award applications	na	\$149,000	\$149,000

Program	Major Activities	Average Award (FY2007)	FY2007 Appropriation	FY2008 Administration Budget Request
Total	—	—	\$93,141,000	\$93,141,000

Source: U.S. Department of Education. Budget Service. *Fiscal Year 2008 Justifications of Appropriations Estimates to the Congress.*

Program Direction Through Appropriations Legislation

During the years of increased funding for Title VI, the funds were accompanied by numerous provisions in annual appropriations acts and conference reports which specify not only the general activities for which funds are to be used but the particular languages or world regions in which aided students are to specialize (e.g., study of the Arabic language or Central Asian nations). The FY2002 Department of Education Appropriations Act (P.L. 107-116) and accompanying conference report (H.Rept. 107-342) included a number of earmarks of the *increased* funds (i.e., those above the previous year's appropriation).

Although omitting these earmarks, the appropriations legislation for FY2004, the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2004 (P.L. 108-199) and conference report (P.L. 108-401), retained provisions specifying the world regions and languages to which Title VI funds should be directed. The general stated purpose of this guidance is to “sustain the investments made last year to train experts who have foreign language proficiency and cross-cultural skills in the targeted world areas of Central and South Asia, the Middle East, Russia, and the Independent States of the former Soviet Union, and provide new resources to build foreign language capacity and international expertise in these strategic world areas important to national security interests and other areas, including southeast Asia and Africa.”

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 108-447) and conference report (H.Rept. 108-792) contain no constraints on the languages of emphasis or the distribution of funds among programs. The act does earmark one percent of the total appropriation for program evaluation, national outreach, and information dissemination and \$1,500,000 for an independent review of Title VI programs to be conducted by the National Research Council.

Evaluation of HEA Title VI Programs

The only significant, current sources of evaluations of HEA Title VI programs are reports and projects prepared by the non-governmental National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at the University of Maryland (formerly at Johns Hopkins University). As noted in **Table 1**, funds under the International Research and Studies program may be used, among other activities, for assessment of the effects of HEA Title VI programs, including the utilization of program graduates. In recent years, ED has provided funds under this program to the NFLC to develop an “Evaluation of Exchange, Language, International and Area Studies (EELIAS) Project,”³ as well as to prepare the report described immediately below.

The EELIAS project is intended to meet the evaluation and assessment needs of HEA Title VI both in general and specifically with respect to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, P.L. 103-62). For both HEA Title VI and the Fulbright-Hays program administered by ED (described later in this report), the project is developing (a) performance indicators, (b) an ongoing, Internet-based data reporting system, and (c) an evaluation of each of the Title VI programs. The project also is intended to develop methods for determining the level of need for advanced foreign language and international studies, and the current capacity of IHEs to meet those needs. The project will incorporate both internal (institutional) and external evaluations of each program. The evaluation system will be phased in over a five-year period (1998-2003).

A 2000 report prepared by NFLC staff, *Language and National Security in the 21st Century: The Role of Title VI/Fulbright-Hays in Supporting National Language Capacity*, evaluated the impact of the foreign language components only (i.e., not the area studies, business-international

³ For additional information on this project, see <http://www.nflc.org/activities/eelias.shtml>.

education or other aspects) of HEA Title VI, as well as the Fulbright-Hays program administered by ED. The authors of this report conclude that HEA Title VI support has been of “critical” importance to maintaining “the nation’s capacity in the less commonly taught languages ... which have had, now have, and will have strategic importance for the United States at unpredictable moments.” For example, the authors of this report found that IHEs receiving Title VI NLAC grants enroll 59% of all graduate students in the *Less Commonly Taught Languages*, and 81% of those in the *Least Commonly Taught Languages*; and Title VI grants have supported the development of over one-half of the textbooks used by IHEs in the *Less Commonly Taught Languages*.

Selected HEA Title VI Reauthorization Issues

The Higher Education Act may be considered for reauthorization during the 110th Congress. The following section discusses some of the HEA Title VI-related issues which are likely to be debated as part of that process.

Should the Federal Government Continue to Support Foreign Language and Area Studies in American Institutions of Higher Education Through HEA Title VI?

There appears to be broad agreement that interaction between American society and people and cultures from throughout the world is increasing steadily, in some cases generating national security concerns involving nations large and small. In order to respond to these developments, it is deemed important that our nation should provide sufficient education and support to enable a minimum number of people to acquire advanced knowledge of the language and culture of the world’s nations and regions which are of current concern. In many cases, foreign nations and cultures have attracted major national attention and concern relatively recently—for example, Afghanistan. Further, since it may be impossible to predict which additional nations will generate such concern in the future, and substantial time is required to develop the necessary human capital, it is important to provide ongoing support for instruction in all of the world’s major languages and cultures, and even many of the minor ones.

So, the question is not whether support is important for instruction in “critical” foreign languages and cultures, typically defined as those in which there is a major security or trade interest, and especially the subset of these that are infrequently taught in the nation’s colleges and universities. Rather it may be questioned whether such support should be provided specifically by the federal government and if so, whether it should be focused on the nation’s colleges and universities, on federally-operated institutions which are dedicated to providing instruction to government employees, or both. The federal government operates two foreign language schools to help meet the government’s direct, immediate foreign language requirements: the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California, and the Foreign Service Institute School for Language Studies in Arlington, Virginia.

Overall, the structure of Title VI—specifically the provision of grants to IHEs to develop and conduct educational programs in specific subject areas—departs significantly from the general approach of the HEA. The primary strategy of the HEA is to provide student aid, usually on the basis of financial need, and to leave the selection of subjects to be studied to the students. Even most institutional aid, other than Title VI, is focused on specific types of high-need institutions, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, not particular subject fields. In contrast, HEA Title VI provides a combination of institutional aid to support instruction in a specific

(although multi-faceted) field, combined with fellowships limited to students in that field. Title VI is one of only two HEA programs focused on specific subject areas, and is the most targeted of those, and as such requires particular justification.⁴

The primary argument supporting this departure from the general HEA strategy is that advanced study of foreign languages and regions is of special importance to the Nation, especially (but not only) with respect to national security, defense and economic competitiveness. Supporters of the continuation of subject area-specific aid under Title VI would argue that maintaining research and instructional programs in critical foreign language and area studies is not only a national priority, but should be supported in both federally-operated institutions as well as colleges and universities accessible to the Nation at large. The needs of federal employees are only a subset of the range of national requirements for persons knowledgeable in foreign languages and cultures. Such skills are needed not only for national defense and diplomacy, but also international trade, and outreach activities to increase understanding of foreign nations and cultures among the broader public. In addition, the research necessary to expand understanding of foreign cultures, or to improve methods of foreign language instruction, is much more likely to take place in IHEs than in federal institutions narrowly dedicated to intensive language instruction. Finally, the quality of FLAS programs depends to a significant degree on the development of linkages between American and foreign educational institutions, and it is easier for colleges and universities to establish such ties than federal government institutions whose motivations may be suspected in some parts of the world.

In addition, the support for a specific subject area under HEA Title VI is not unique when the scope is widened to include federal agencies other than ED. Although few ED programs provide postsecondary institutional and student aid limited to a specific field, several other federal agencies provide support to IHEs that is focused on providing instruction in specific subject areas on a much larger scale than HEA Title VI. Examples include support for health care education and training by the National Institutes of Health and other agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services, support for science and mathematics education by the National Science Foundation, and the like. Each of these subject areas has been widely perceived as being of special national interest and therefore worthy of targeted federal support.

It might be argued that if sufficient numbers of students are interested, IHEs will provide adequate levels of instruction and research in critical foreign languages and area studies without targeted federal subsidies under HEA Title VI or other programs. Further, if aid such as that provided under Title VI is deemed necessary to some degree, it might be limited to paying the start-up costs of initiating instruction and/or research in selected foreign language and area studies, not (as is currently the case) paying a share of ongoing costs of maintaining programs. In addition, more systematic efforts might be made to identify and utilize the language skills of recent immigrants to the United States from all parts of the world.

Certainly colleges and universities are interested in offering a very wide range of courses and programs, and private foundations have occasionally provided significant levels of support for FLAS. IHEs, foundations, and corporations frequently provide funds or in-kind support (such as foregone tuition) to match grants under several HEA Title VI programs currently. However, it is difficult for individual IHEs to offer instruction in relatively rare, but currently critical, languages such as Pashto or Farsi. Proponents of Title VI have argued that because individual institutions, foundations, or states would have insufficient incentive to provide funding for such studies, they

⁴ The other subject area-specific HEA program is Title VII-A-2, Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need. This program, funded at \$31 million for FY2003, provides fellowships for graduate students in the areas of Biology, Chemistry, Computer and Information Science, Engineering, Geological Science, Mathematics, and Physics.

should be supported by the Nation as a whole for reasons of economies of scale. Without targeted federal aid under a program such as Title VI, it is possible that ongoing support for such languages and world regions would be insufficient to meet national needs. Even with Title VI funding, it is possible that the level of support is inadequate, or at least inadequately focused on current needs (see below).

Are HEA Title VI Programs Appropriately Coordinated with Other Federal Efforts to Support Advanced Foreign Language and Area Studies?

This report focuses specifically on Title VI of the HEA because this legislation is being considered for reauthorization by the 109th Congress, and because it is the largest source of federal support for FLAS in U.S. colleges and universities and their students. However, it is not the only source of such support, and it may be questioned whether Title VI is appropriately coordinated with other related programs, or whether some of these programs should be consolidated with Title VI to improve coordination and efficiency. In fact, one of the stated purposes of Title VI is “to coordinate the programs of the Federal Government in the areas of foreign language, area studies, and other international studies” (HEA Section 601(b)(3)).

The primary federal programs with purposes related to those of HEA Title VI—beyond the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and the Foreign Service Institute School for Language Studies, which provide instruction to current federal employees—are those authorized by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act, particularly the subset of these that are administered by ED; the National Security Education Program (NSEP); the Gilman International Scholarship Program; and international activities conducted under ED’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

Fulbright-Hays Act

The Fulbright-Hays Act authorizes a number of activities, primarily a variety of international exchange activities administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State. These are exchanges of graduate students and scholars in a variety of fields (i.e., they are not limited to foreign language and area studies), as well as persons in a wide variety of professions. Although these are two-way exchange activities, the majority of participants are citizens of nations other than the United States.

In contrast, the Fulbright-Hays programs most relevant to HEA Title VI are those administered by ED’s Office of Postsecondary Education, which support a variety of foreign travel-related activities by American graduate students and professors. These include faculty research abroad, travel abroad by doctoral students conducting dissertation research, and group seminars abroad. All of these activities are available to U.S. citizens (or nationals) only, and are to be focused on improving FLAS instruction in American colleges and universities. ED’s Fulbright-Hays programs are much smaller in scale than HEA Title VI—their total appropriation level was \$12.9 million for FY2003.

National Security Education Program

The NSEP, under the David L. Boren National Security Education Act (NSEA),⁵ authorizes a program of aid for international education and foreign language studies by American undergraduate and graduate students.⁶ Three types of assistance are authorized by the NSEA: (a) scholarships for undergraduate students to study in a “critical” foreign country; (b) grants to institutions of higher education to establish or operate programs in “critical” foreign language and area studies areas; and (c) fellowships to graduate students for education abroad or in the U.S. in “critical” foreign language, disciplines, and area studies. The NSEA posits a goal of devoting one-third of annual grant funding to each of these three activities. A trust fund of \$150 million was initially provided in FY1992 from which amounts were to be withdrawn in future years as provided in annual appropriations bills.

Individuals who receive NSEP fellowships and scholarships are obligated for a limited period of time to seek employment in a national security position,⁷ or if, after a “good faith” effort, they are unsuccessful in obtaining such positions, they can fulfill the requirement through work in the field of higher education in an area of study for which the scholarship was awarded.

From the beginning of this program through 2002, institutional grants have been focused on supporting the establishment of instructional and exchange programs involving less commonly taught languages and nations/regions at a wide variety of U.S. IHEs; increasing the number of disadvantaged/minority students participating in international education/exchange programs; and integrating foreign language and international studies with professional education in a variety of fields. These activities have often been similar to those supported under HEA Title VI. A revised strategy has been announced for institutional grants beginning in 2003. This new strategy includes accelerated pursuit of a Flagship Language Initiative—grants focused on supporting advanced study of the most critical foreign languages—initiated in 2002 and explicitly authorized by P.L. 107-306, the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2003.

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) is intended to complement, and not duplicate, the foreign language and area studies programs authorized under HEA Title VI and other legislation. Unique elements of the NSEP, compared to other federal programs of aid to international education or exchange, include its service requirement and (with the exception of the “Gilman International Scholarship Program” described below) its support of travel grants to undergraduate students. However, there may be greater potential for overlap between the NSEP institutional grants and HEA Title VI National and Language Resource Center grants.

The NSEP is administered by the Department of Defense’s National Defense University, under the guidance of a National Security Education Board (NSEB). The nations, disciplines, and subject areas that are “critical” to national security are to be determined by the Board, taking into account federal government needs as well as the supply of individuals knowledgeable in those areas. As with many of the federal government’s programs supporting international education and exchange, the NSEP is largely administered through non-governmental organizations that process applications and oversee the award competition. The Institute of International Education (IIE) performs this role with respect to undergraduate students, while the Academy for Educational Development (AED) does so for the graduate fellowship competition.

⁵ Title VIII of P.L. 102-183, the Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1992, as amended.

⁶ For more information on the National Security Education Program, see CRS Report RL31643, *National Security Education Program: Background and Issues*, by Jeffrey J. Kuenzi and Wayne C. Riddle.

⁷ In practice, this requirement has been interpreted relatively broadly to include a wide variety of federal agencies and positions. See <http://www.iie.org/template.cfm?&template=/programs/nsep/agencies.htm>.

The NSEP began making grants in academic year 1994-1995. Early in the 104th Congress, FY1995 rescissions were passed by the House of Representatives that would have eliminated the program and returned all of its \$150 million trust fund to the Treasury. Under the final compromise with the Senate, the trust fund was cut in half, to \$75 million (P.L. 104-6). The Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (P.L. 107-248) set the annual funding level for the NSEP at \$8 million, although additional appropriations have been authorized by P.L. 107-306.

The largest differences between the NSEP and HEA Title VI are that only the former has a service requirement, is focused primarily on helping to meet the national security-related FLAS skill needs of the federal government, is financed via a trust fund, and supports international travel by undergraduate students. In addition, the NSEP is administered by DOD, not ED, and is much smaller in scale than Title VI.

Gilman International Scholarship Program

This relatively small, new program is authorized by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000 (Title III of P.L. 106-309), which authorizes the appropriation of \$1.5 million per year for scholarships of up to \$5,000 for U.S. citizen undergraduate (including community college) students. The scholarships may be used to pay the costs of travel plus tuition and related study abroad expenses. In order to be eligible students must be recipients of financial assistance under ED's Pell Grant program—that is, undergraduate students from relatively low-income families.⁸

In the selection of grant recipients, preference is given to those who have not previously studied abroad. Students may study any subject and travel to any region of the world (except Cuba or a country identified in a “travel warning” issued by the Department of State); that is, there is no specific focus on foreign language or international studies, nor on languages or regions deemed “critical” to national security or other interests. A primary purpose of the Gilman program is to provide study abroad opportunities to students who might otherwise be unable to participate in such programs. For the 2002-2003 academic year, 179 students have received Gilman Scholarships. The Gilman program is administered by the Department of State, via the non-governmental Institute of International Education.

FIPSE International Programs

The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), in ED's Office of Postsecondary Education, administers a number of relatively small programs intended to foster innovative approaches to U.S. postsecondary education. FIPSE is authorized by Title VII, Part B of the HEA. Although some grants under FIPSE's general “comprehensive” program have supported international education programs,⁹ the primary targeted support for activities related to those under HEA Title VI is provided under three specific programs:

- the Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education,
- the U.S.-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program, and
- the European Community-United States of America Cooperation Program in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training.

⁸ For a discussion of the Pell Grant program, see CRS Report RL33040, *The Higher Education Act: Reauthorization Status and Issues*, by Adam Stoll.

⁹ For example, such a FIPSE grant, along with funding from a number of other federal programs and agencies, has been made to the National Foreign Language Center to support the development of LangNet, an online source for dissemination of language teaching resources; see <http://www.langnet.org>.

Each of these programs provides multi-year grants made through competition to U.S. IHEs to form consortia with foreign institutions to support activities such as cooperation and exchange of students and staff, plus development of curricula. These programs are also relatively small; the FY2002 funding levels are \$2,043,000 for the Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education, \$1,495,000 for the U.S.-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program, and \$2,254,000 for the European Community-United States of America Cooperation Program in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training.

Issues Regarding Coordination or Consolidation

It may be questioned whether these related programs should be consolidated, or at least explicitly placed under the “umbrella” of a coordinated, coherent national strategy. It is often assumed that efficiency is enhanced when separate federal programs serving similar purposes are consolidated, especially if the programs involve potentially duplicative grant competitions. On the other hand, the importance of coordination among, or possible consolidation of, these programs may be diminished somewhat by the fact that the other programs discussed immediately above are much smaller in scale than Title VI.

The Fulbright-Hays, FIPSE, and (at least in the past) NSEP institutional grant programs described above are most similar to the activities funded by HEA Title VI. They are already potentially coordinated in the sense that all three programs are administered by ED’s Office of Postsecondary Education Programs. Nevertheless, coordination and efficiency might be further enhanced if these programs were fully consolidated or placed under a single coordinating or advisory board.

Although the NSEP has several similar purposes, its role of emphasizing national security needs, and its service requirement for aid recipients, distinguish it from the other programs discussed above. As long as the NSEP maintains these characteristics, coordination might be more consistent with its purposes than consolidation with Title VI and related programs, at least with respect to the scholarship and fellowship programs. Currently, such coordination occurs through representation on the National Security Education Board of a designee of the Secretary of Education. Nevertheless, the efficiency of operating a separate program with purposes similar to those of Title VI may be questioned, especially when the NSEP has experienced a substantial reduction in its trust fund, which may call into question its long-term viability under its current funding structure, since annual appropriations substantially exceed the fund’s earnings.

The Gilman International Scholarship Program also provides funding for undergraduate students to travel abroad, but lacks the national security-related focus and service requirements of the NSEP. Particularly given its linkage to ED’s Pell Grant program, the possibility of transferring the Gilman program from the Department of State to ED and incorporating it under the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Programs of HEA Title VI might be considered.

Proposals might also be considered to establish a multi-agency board, endowment, foundation, or other independent federal entity to coordinate and/or administer *all* federal programs dealing with foreign language and international studies, including the more extensive Fulbright-Hays activities administered by the Department of State, and possibly even the relatively small K-12 Foreign Language Assistance Program authorized by Title V-D-9 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).¹⁰ One function for such a board or agency might be relatively long-range

¹⁰ As noted earlier, S. 1799 (107th Congress) proposes that the National Research Council study the feasibility of establishing a National Language Foundation. See also Richard D. Brecht, “Language, National Security, and the Academic Sector: Recommendations for Federal Action,” *NFLC Policy Issues*, November 2000; and American Council on Education, *Beyond September 11: A Comprehensive National Policy on International Education*, 2002.

planning to attempt to meet both the federal government's and the nation's needs for FLAS specialists in a coordinated manner.

Finally, it might be questioned whether there should be increased coordination between IHEs funded by HEA Title VI and the federal agencies which offer language instruction. For example, should there be some degree of explicit coordination between the targeting of HEA Title VI fellowships and institutional grants with the foreign language needs of federal government agencies, or should there be more sharing of resources and coordination of instructional programs between federal language training institutions and IHEs supported by Title VI?

Should There Be Increased Targeting of Title VI Grants on Foreign Languages and World Regions of “Critical” Interest to the Federal Government?

Currently, HEA Title VI grants are widely dispersed across virtually all of the world's significant languages and regions. A listing of the NLAC and FLAS Fellowship grant recipients for the FY2000-2002 cycle reflects a balance among all of the world's regions, including several grants for study of such critical areas—defined as those in which there is a substantial national security, trade or diplomatic interest, and which are infrequently studied in U.S. IHEs—as the Middle East and South Asia, but also numerous grants for study of areas such as Western Europe that are frequently included in IHE curricula without targeted federal assistance.

While the languages or world regions considered to be “critical” in terms of their national security or trade significance may vary over time, and it would probably be disruptive and unproductive to substantially shift Title VI funding whenever a newly critical language or region is identified, it should be possible to identify a relatively stable group of languages or regions which are infrequently taught in American IHEs, on which Title VI grants could be targeted to a greater degree. This raises the question of who should make decisions regarding targeting of funds on different activities, languages or regions—ED alone, ED through an interagency advisory body (such as the one which provides guidance on NSEP grants), a new entity responsible for all federal FLAS programs and activities (as discussed above), or Congress through authorizing or appropriations legislation?

As noted in **Table 1**, several of the HEA Title VI programs require that federal funds be matched with non-federal resources. For this and other reasons, it is frequently argued that the scale of federal support for FLAS studies under this program extends substantially beyond the level of direct funding—namely, that the Title VI grants serve as a magnet for additional funds from a variety of institutional, foundation, corporate, and other private sector sources, through matching and possibly also “quality signaling” effects.¹¹ Nevertheless, it may be questioned whether the scale of the HEA Title VI program, however well targeted, is adequate to meet national needs.

In contrast, opponents of increased targeting of HEA Title VI grants on languages and regions deemed to be critical currently might argue that it is impossible to adequately predict what those languages and regions will be several years in the future (the lead time between submitting applications and fully implementing new programs), or the extent to which grants should be focused on any of them. Given this uncertainty, it might be best, they argue, to rely largely on the initiative of IHEs to develop and submit proposals for new Title VI grants, and to make grants to

¹¹ It is sometimes argued that the receipt of grants under a competitive program such as HEA Title VI is perceived as a “signal of quality” that may serve as a magnet for more grants from foundations or other private sector funding sources, beyond specific matching requirements.

support study of a comprehensive range of languages and regions, as has generally occurred in the past, rather than attempting to direct grants through a central coordinating body.

It is difficult to quantify the level of such national needs in a precise or systematic manner. One regular effort to do so is an annual survey and analysis of Federal Language Needs, conducted as part of the NSEP,¹² which is linked to the award of scholarships, fellowships, and institutional grants under that program. While this annual series of reports does not attempt to quantify the level of need for individuals with specific language or other skills, it does identify a large number of foreign languages, world regions, and disciplines that are of major national security interest and that are infrequently taught in the nation's colleges and universities.

Another study of such language needs has recently been conducted by the General Accounting Office. The GAO report, which focused on 4 federal departments or agencies (the Army, the State Department, the Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation), concluded that "[T]he changing security environment and the increasing globalization of the U.S. economy have significantly increased the need for federal employees with foreign language skills. These four agencies reported shortages of translators and interpreters as well as diplomats and intelligence specialists with critical foreign language skills. Agency officials said that these shortfalls have harmed agency operations and hindered U.S. military, law enforcement, intelligence, counterterrorism, and diplomatic efforts."¹³

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¹² See http://www.ndu.edu/nsep/Federal_Language_Needs_2001.htm.

¹³ General Accounting Office, *Foreign Languages: Human Capital Approach Needed to Correct Staffing and Proficiency Shortfalls*, GAO-02-375, January 2002.